

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9255

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS ROME 12664

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: TCDD CLOUD MILAN

FOLLOWING SENT CDR USASETAF VICENZA ITALY AESE-CS ACTION
IMMEDIATE CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GERMANY INFO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ROME, USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY, AFSOUTH NAPLES,
LANDSOUTH VERONA, MILAN, CHIEF MAAG ROME JUL 26
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE SUBJECT: TCDD CLOUD MILAN

REFERENCES: A. UNCLASSIFIED EMBASSY MESSAGE 11966, 251845Z
JULY 1976 (NOTAL).

B. FONECON26 JUL 76, 0023Z, BETWEEN CPT TUTTLE, USAREUR
SOC, AND CPT AMMENDOLIA, SETAF.

C. FONECON26 JUL 76, 0020Z, BETWEEN CPT AMMENDOLIA,
USASETAF AND LTC NASH, HQ USEUCOM OPERATIONS CENTER.

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFERENCE A AND WITH TELEPHONIC APPROVAL IN
REFERENCES B AND C, SETAF PROCEEDED WITH A TEAM OF TWO EOD
OFFICERS TO BRIEF THE PREFECT OF MILAN. ACCOMPANYING THE TWO
OFFICERS WAS A SETAF U.S. WARRANT OFFICER INTERPRETER AND
THE ITALIAN ARMY DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, SETAF. THE TWO EOD
OFFICERS HAD EXPERIENCE IN INDUSTRIAL CHEMICAL DECONTAMINATION
WHILE STATIONED IN CONUS AND WERE TASKED TO PROVIDE AN
INFORMATION BRIEFING TO THE PREFECT OF MILAN ON TRICHLOROPHENOL
(TCDO), TO VISIT THE CONTAMINATED SITE. THE BRIEFING OFFICERS
DEPARTED SETAF AT 0835, 26 JUL 76 AND BRIEFED THE PREFECT IN
MILAN AT APPROXIMATELY 1020 HOURS. THE EAM RETURNED
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TO SETAF AT APPROXIMATELY 1415 HOURS, 26 JULY 76. SITE VISIT

WAS NOT DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE PREFECT OF MILAN.

2. AFTER THE SETAF INFORMATION BRIEFING ON THE CHEMICAL (TCDD), THE PREFECT AND THE ITALIAN CHEMIST PRESENT POINTED OUT TO HTE BRIEFING OFFICERS THAT THEIR MAIN CONCERN WAS NOT THE CHEMICAL TCDD BUT A VERY TOXIC BYPRODUCT TETRACHLORODIBENZOPARADIOXINE RESULTING FROM AN INDUSTRIAL PLANT ACCIDENT. THIS BYPRODUCT WAS PRODUCED WHEN THE PROCESSING TEMPERATURE OF TRICHLOROPHENOL WAS ACCIDENTLY INCREASED TO 250 CENTIGRADE, RESULTING IN THE RELEASE OF THE TOXIC CLOUD WHICH HAD SETTLED TO THE GORUND AND CONTAMINATED APPROXIMATELY 30 ACRES. THE PREFECT INDICATED THE RESIDENTS OF THE AREA WERE BEING EVACUATED.

3. THE SCIENTISTS AT THE MEETING INDICATED THAT THEY HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY IN THE USA WHICH IS REPORTED TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CASE. THE SITUATION THAT EXISTS IS BEYOND THE CHNICAL CAPABILITIES OF THE U.S. FORCES IN EUROPE.

4. THE PREFECT OF MILAN COMPLIMENTED THE ITALIAN AND U.S. ARMY REPRESENTATIVES FOR THEIR RAPID RESPONSE AND CONCERN AND REALIZED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS BEYOND THE LIMITED CAPABILITIES OF SETAF. HE AND HIS CHEMICAL ADVISORS INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD SEND AN OFFICIAL REQUEST TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY FOR ASSISTANCE.

5. NO FURTHER ACTION REQUEST WAS GIVEN SETAF. RECOMMEND THE EMBASSYIN ROME CONTACT INDUSTRIAL FIRM IN CONUS FOR ASSISTANCE.

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